

REMARKS

By this paper, claims 1, 12 and 17 have been amended. Claims 1-35 remain pending.

In the outstanding Office action dated June 16, 2004, claims 1-3, 5-9, 12-15, 17, 18, 20 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Besselink (6,488,702). Additionally, claims 10, 19 and 23 were rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Besselink. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of the claims under §§ 102 and 103.

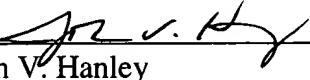
Each of the examined claims have been amended to recite at least a pair of adjacent longitudinal members/beams each having a radial thickness that is greater than the recited circumferential width. Clearly, the cited Besselink patent does not teach such structure. In fact, the Besselink reference teaches segments 8 and 9 having different circumferential widths, at least one of the segments having a circumferential width which is in fact, clearly greater than its radial thickness. Accordingly, Besselink does not suggest the present invention and thus a *prima facia* case of obviousness cannot be said to exist. Therefore, it is believed that each of the pending claims are allowable over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have attempted to completely respond to the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office action. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully request that the application be reconsidered, the claims allowed and the application passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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